

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino **Josie Gonzales Fifth District**

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MARCH 27, 2008



**JGFDS-PR-205 COUNTY SETTLES PERCHLORATE LAWSUITS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COUNTY SETTLES PERCHLORATE LAWSUITS WITH COLTON AND RIALTO

SAN BERNARDINO – The cities of Rialto and Colton and the County of San Bernardino inked their signatures on a settlement of lawsuits related to the perchlorate contamination of the Rialto-Colton Basin aquifer.

The county is obligated to take a number of actions under the terms of the settlement, including treating and containing the perchlorate groundwater contamination in the western portion of the Rialto-Colton Basin and paying \$4 million to Rialto and \$1 million to Colton.

In exchange, the two cities will dismiss all perchlorate contamination claims against the county, as well as claims against Robertson's Ready Mix, Inc. and the Schulz parties.

"My main focus has always been the perchlorate contamination clean up," said county 5th District Supervisor Josie Gonzales. "This settlement will serve as a catalyst for the other key defendants in these lawsuits to focus on their efforts to resolve the groundwater pollution in the Rialto-Colton Basin."

The county has already spent over \$8 million to investigate and treat the perchlorate contamination plume near the landfill. Those expenses also include the cost of providing replacement water to Rialto residents.

"I am very excited and pleased we've reached a settlement with the county," said Rialto Mayor Pro Tem Winnie Hanson. "I look forward to continuing an excellent relationship with our County Board of Supervisors," she said.

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“This is a major step towards assuring our residents clean drinking water,” added Rialto City Councilmember Ed Scott. “We commend the county for stepping forward.”

The county expects to spend tens of millions of dollars more on treatment to comply with the terms of the settlement agreement.

The county also agreed to provide 200 acre-feet of treated water from its treatment facility to Colton. Colton will provide 200 acre-feet of its water rights to the county for this purpose. An acre-foot of water is considered enough water to serve two typical Southland families for a year.

"The City of Colton appreciates the county's efforts to address the perchlorate contamination in the Rialto-Colton Basin," said Colton Mayor Kelly Chastain, on behalf of the Colton City Council and the Colton City Council Perchlorate Remediation Subcommittee.

“With this settlement, the county commits to cleaning up the contamination in the western portion of the Basin. At the same time, the county will reimburse Colton for a portion of its costs in addressing the contamination and provide it treated water,” said Mayor Chastain.

“By its actions, the county has led the way, and Colton looks forward to continuing to work with the county and the City of Rialto to resolve the perchlorate problem,” she added.

The lawsuits filed by the cities, claimed that the county, Robertson’s and the Schulz parties were among those liable for a plume of perchlorate contamination alleged to be emanating from the Mid-Valley Landfill and adjacent land the county purchased from the Schulz parties for landfill expansion.

Robertson’s operates an aggregate mining facility on the landfill expansion land. The lawsuits also allege liability on the part of others for the contamination of the Rialto-Colton Basin, including those associated with sources down-gradient of the county’s property and to the east of the county’s property.

The county, Robertson’s and the Schulz parties admitted no liability as part of the settlement agreement, which is subject to court approval.

The 5th District includes the unincorporated areas of Bloomington, Muscoy and Arrowhead Farms, the city of Rialto, major portions of the cities of Colton and San Bernardino, and a segment of the city of Fontana.